



THE CENTER FOR EST. 1913
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS
RESEARCH • ANALYSIS • ACTION

June 4, 2021

Chairman Matt Dolan
1 Capitol Square
Statehouse, 1st Fl. Rm. 127
Columbus, OH 43215

Vice Chairwoman Theresa Gavarone
1 Capitol Square
Statehouse, 2nd Fl. Rm. 221
Columbus, OH 43215

Ranking Member Vernon Sykes
1 Capitol Square
Statehouse, Ground Fl. Rm. 051
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairwoman Gavarone and Ranking Member Sykes,

Thank you for your work ushering the budget through these last few weeks and taking our feedback into account. The Center for Community Solutions is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank that aims to improve health, social and economic conditions through research, policy analysis and communication.

Maternal health

The inclusion of Medicaid coverage for women up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level in the postpartum period for 12 full months is a significant step toward improving maternal health in the state of Ohio and we commend the Senate for including this policy and associated funding. Coverage is critical to maintaining access to services that can decrease the incidence of maternal deaths and complications.

We continue to support ongoing work across the legislative and executive branches that would provide Medicaid reimbursement for doula services. We are supportive of achieving this through the budget process, as this would kickstart the development of rules and a payment mechanism through Medicaid. Increasing access to doula services has been proven to improve maternal health outcomes, especially for Black women.

Older Ohioans

We are grateful that Substitute House Bill 110 maintains an increase in funding for adult protective services. Community Solutions has a long history of advocating for a strong adult protective services system in Ohio. Prior to the pandemic, older Ohioans were more susceptible to unjust circumstances such as financial exploitation from scam artists, friends or family and physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The pandemic, including social distancing guidelines, non-visitor policies and capacity mandates meant older adults, like all of us, have had less interaction with society, reducing the likelihood for mandatory reporters of elder abuse to recognize and report it. We are concerned in the coming months there will be an uptick in caseload in each county as restrictions are lifted and the vaccines becomes

more widely available. The increase included in the substitute bill will bring each county to \$65,000 per county, enough to support at least one full time dedicated APS caseworker per county.

We are pleased to see an expansion of the Program for All Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) program included the budget. In a [recent report](#) that our team authored, we highlighted the benefits of the PACE program and look forward to the possibility of expanding the program to more eligible Ohioans.

We are excited to see the maintained inclusion of the Elderly/Disabled Simplified Application Project (EDSAP) to increase access to and retention in SNAP for older adults and disabled Ohioans in this substitute bill. This waiver package is crucial in an increasingly aging state where a large population is eligible for SNAP but face numerous barriers in remaining consistently enrolled in the program. Additionally, this waiver package will reduce county workloads and allow caseworkers to dedicate more time to more difficult SNAP cases.

Multi-system youth

We continue to support the recommendations of the Multi-System Youth (MSY) Action Plan and current state efforts and funding to develop a program that can provide more comprehensive care for children with complex needs through OhioRISE (Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence). State support, across the board for MSY, is needed by families navigating a complex network of care for their children. OhioRISE will go a long way in providing coordinated services for MSY and working toward eliminating forced custody relinquishment and out of state residential placement.

Medicaid

Relatedly, we are concerned about the inclusion of language that would terminate the procurement process for Medicaid managed care plans in Ohio. While perhaps unintended, this language *would* impact the numerous existing improvement efforts of the state including OhioRISE and the nearly 60,000 children it would serve, the new pharmacy benefit management system, the streamlined provider credentialing and billing mechanisms of the state. With over \$416 million in administrative savings produced by these reforms, the General Assembly would be adding to the overhead of the program and need to find additional revenue to support the existing program. Additionally, given our state's current underperformance in achieving value, we are significantly concerned this effort will diminish the benefits of market competition in managed care, possibly running afoul of federal standards in procurement.

Thank you for your time and attention to vital programs for Ohioans. We are happy to provide additional information or answer any questions at tbritton@communitysolutions.com.

Sincerely,

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